



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

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Good afternoon,

AOT has created a valuable resource for you to use to inform elected officials and community leaders as to why travel and tourism is important to our state's economy and how it supports vital public services.

The [Tourism Works for Arizona](#) factsheet provides statistical information that promotes the economic impact of the travel and tourism industry for the Grand Canyon State, as well as the financial benefits to specific counties. The two-sided document is available to download off AOT's business-to-business Web site, [www.AZOT.gov](http://www.AZOT.gov).

Also, today marks the start of the [American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association](#) (AIANTA) Conference. The event is September 12–14 at the Radisson Ft. McDowell Resort.

The AIANTA group works to expand tourism activity on Native Lands and this conference is one of the largest Native American tourism conferences within the United States. Arizona is a proud sponsor and is honored to host this year's event. More than 400 attendees are expected to participate.

And in restaurant news – [Arizona Restaurant Week](#) is September 17 - 25! This year's event is a statewide affair featuring restaurants in northern, central and southern Arizona. From Mexican fare, American steakhouse, Polynesian dining and Chinese cuisine, you can enjoy it all during Arizona Restaurant Week!

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

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## AOT News

### Major Stars Stepping Out at Arizona Best Fest in Prescott

*Wayne Newton, Jordin Sparks, Nils Lofgren, Jerry Riopelle, The Tubes Plus a 'Salute to Arizona' Lights up Mainstage Schedule*

Big name Arizona-linked entertainers take the Mainstage at Arizona Best Fest in Prescott, September 16-18, headlining a three-day Arizona showcase of history, food, culture, science, and the future.

Historic downtown Prescott serves as the celebrated backdrop to the Arizona Centennial Signature event, which now boasts a Mainstage lineup featuring:

- Friday, September 16 — Virtuoso rock guitarist Nils Lofgren , and rock 'n roll veterans The Tubes
- Saturday, September 17 — American Idol-turned-superstar songstress Jordin Sparks and the ever popular rhythmic rock/blues artist Jerry Riopelle
- Sunday, September 18 — World renowned Arizona native, also known as 'Mr. Las Vegas' himself, Wayne Newton

Preceding Ms. Sparks on the Mainstage is a historical musical retrospective aptly titled "Salute to Arizona". The evening culminates with a festive fireworks display. Plus Arizona's Official State Historian Marshall Trimble and Arizona's Official State Balladeer Dolan Ellis also will perform on the Mainstage.

Arizona Best Fest Series leads an active calendar of Arizona Centennial Signature Events and Projects. The "best of" celebratory series moves to Tucson and later to Phoenix as it makes its three-city tour to Arizona's three territorial capitals. The Best of Arizona showcase celebrates Arizona's 100 Years, and comprises interactive historic pavilions, cultural villages, a western town, seven stages of entertainment, Arizona artists, food, wine, craft beer and much more. As the first Best Fest event in a series of three, the Prescott event is especially anticipated since the city was the first Arizona Territorial Capital. The event encompasses the beautiful Prescott Courthouse Square in the city's historic downtown.

Another highlight of the three days of festivities, anticipated to attract visitors throughout Arizona, is the unveiling of the **USPS Arizona Centennial Commemorative Stamp** at Prescott's Courthouse Square Friday, September 16, at 4:00 p.m.

For all the latest information, including the entertainment schedule at Arizona Best Fest in Prescott, visit [www.AZ100Years.org](http://www.AZ100Years.org) or the Prescott Daily Courier's dedicated online website for Best Fest <http://touristtreasuresaz.com/main.asp?SectionID=33>.

### Join the Arizona Office of Tourism for annual media marketplaces in New York City, and Toronto, or both!

Events are taking place Tuesday, November 15 in New York, and Wednesday November 16, 2011 in Toronto. Participation is open to Arizona tourism suppliers with preference given to

CVBs, Chambers and DMOs. For more information or to request participation forms for either event, please contact Kara Woroniec at [kworoniec@azot.gov](mailto:kworoniec@azot.gov) or 602-364-3715.

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## Upcoming Events & Activities

### Montreal Media Mission

Date: September 27– 28

Location: Montreal, QB

### Discover America Day - Canada

Date: October 3

Location: Toronto, ON

### Arizona Showcase

Date: October 6

Location: Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

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## Industry News

### **Arizona Restaurant Week Goes Statewide September 17 - 25!**

More than 200 restaurants in 9 days? It's a deliciously daunting proposition. For the first time, Arizona Restaurant Week is going statewide so pack the car and ready your appetite. New to the dinner party, northern Arizona restaurants have grown into destinations of their own. We couldn't be more thrilled to have them participate in Arizona Restaurant Week. The list of restaurants is still growing, but we expect more than 200 of the state's top dining spots participate. For more information, visit [www.arizonarestaurantweek.com](http://www.arizonarestaurantweek.com).

### **New Surprising Study Finds Travel Bookings above Last Year**

A new and surprising survey finds that travel booking so far in 2011 are outpacing last year at this time -- this finding goes against conventional wisdom that holds the US is on an economic rollercoaster going down. The Travel Leaders Fall Travel Trends survey also identifies the top domestic and international destinations being booked this year, as well as destinations by Travel Leaders experts.

"Las Vegas, Orlando and Honolulu, respectively, are the top three destinations being booked for the remainder of the year," the survey says. But the top recommendation from Travel Leaders agents would be Maui (followed by Orlando and Honolulu).

Despite the extreme volatility in the United States' economy in the month of August -- the same timeframe as the survey took place -- travel agents from across the country indicate that bookings are slightly higher for this fall than they were for the fall of 2010. The survey includes

responses from 443 Travel Leaders owners, managers and frontline travel agents throughout the United States. Travel Leaders is part of Travel Leaders Group - which is a North American travel company that generates gross travel sales in excess of \$16.6 billion. (*Travel Mole, September 5*)

### **Global Hotels, Rates on the Rise**

Hotels around the world have a growth rate of 4 percent in the first half of 2011, according to a new study by Hogg Robinson Group (HRG). The international corporate services company says of the 50 cities they surveyed, 33 reported a year-on-year increase hotel rates. Growth was particularly strong in Asia.

"We can expect hotel rates to continue to rise as more economies grow and business demand picks up," said Stewart Harvey, Group Commercial Director for HRG.

Trends noted by HRG:

- Growth in Los Angeles, Montreal and Toronto was flat but North America overall had a 4 percent rate increase.
- Over two-thirds of the cities surveyed reported hotel rate growth, compared with only one-quarter last year, "supporting signs of global recovery and pick up in business travel in recent months," said HRG.
- Moscow retained its top position with the most expensive hotel rates, "demonstrating the city's position as a strong business destination," said HRG.
- Istanbul had the highest increase in hotel rates at 37 percent "due to the growing interest surrounding the city as a business destination." (*Travel Mole, September 5*)

### **UNWTO Reports 4.5 Percent Growth in International Tourist Arrivals**

International tourism grew by almost 5 percent in the first half of 2011, totaling a new record of 440 million arrivals, according to UNWTO. Results confirm that, in spite of multiple challenges, international tourism continues to consolidate the return to growth initiated in 2010.

International tourist arrivals are estimated to have grown by 4.5 percent in the first half of 2011, consolidating the 6.6 percent increase registered in 2010. Between January and June of this year, the total number of arrivals reached 440 million, 19 million more than in the same period of 2010. Growth in advanced economies (up 4.3 percent) has maintained strength and is closing the gap with emerging economies (up 4.8 percent), which have been driving international tourism growth in recent years. This trend reflects the decreases registered in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as a slight slowdown in the growth of some Asian destinations following a very strong 2010. All world subregions showed positive trends, with the exception of the Middle East and North Africa.

Results were better than expected in Europe (up 6 percent), boosted by the recovery of Northern Europe (up 7 percent) and Central and Eastern Europe (up 9 percent), and the temporary redistribution of travel to destinations in Southern and Mediterranean Europe (up 7 percent) due to developments in North Africa (down 13 percent) and the Middle East (down 11 percent). Sub-Saharan Africa (up 9 percent) continued to perform soundly. The Americas (up 6 percent) was slightly above the world average, with remarkably strong results for South America

(up 15 percent). Asia and the Pacific grew at a comparatively slower pace of 5 percent, but this more than consolidates its 13 percent bumper growth of 2010.

Results from recent months show that destinations such as Egypt, Tunisia and Japan are seeing declines in demand clearly reverting. So far, the growth of international tourism arrivals is very much in line with the initial forecast issued by UNWTO at the beginning of 2011, 4 percent to 5 percent, for the full year 2011, a rate slightly above the 4 percent long-term average. As international tourism receipts were more affected by the 2008-09 economic crisis and recovered somewhat slower than arrivals in 2010, this year should also see their further improvement. Following an encouraging first half of 2011, growth in the remainder of the year is expected to soften somewhat as recent months have brought increased uncertainty, hampering business and consumer confidence.

Following the decline registered in 2009, one of the most challenging years for international tourism in decades, the sector rebounded strongly in 2010. International tourist arrivals were up 6.6 percent to 940 million and international tourism receipts grew by 4.7 percent in real terms to reach \$919 billion (693 billion euros). For more information, visit <http://mkt.unwto.org/en/barometer>.

### **More Hotel Travelers Choose Cleanliness over Security**

In something of a surprise, American travelers rank cleanliness over security by a fat margin as the most important factor in selecting a hotel, according to a new survey.

Forty three percent chose cleanliness, while 11 percent cited security, according to the survey conducted on behalf of the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies.

"Price and location were top factors for 23 percent and 19 percent of respondents, respectively," the company said.

"Travelers should take safety precautions more seriously, and travel security should be higher on their checklist than cleanliness," said Jim Villa, a senior vice president and North American manager for Chubb's Accident & Health business. "It seems that more people are concerned about housekeeping than security."

Chubb's survey of 1,000 participants was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation, an independent public opinion and market research firm, in June 2011. (*Travel Mole, September 7*)

### **Study Indicates Fall Travel is going to be Big**

A plethora of seasonal deals and the prospect of fewer crowds are leading to larger numbers of travelers planning fall trips, says the Travel Beat Survey by Ruff Strategic Solutions. A possibly amazing number of 96 percent of consumers polled plan to travel on leisure trips this fall.

Nearly half (44 percent) of those polled noted attractive deals and promotions as the deciding factor in planning fall travel, while 32 percent cited fewer crowds, according to the study conducted on behalf of Travel Guard North American.

“Because of this, many are traveling greater distances to where fall is the shoulder season such as Europe (55 percent) as well as the Caribbean and Mexico (26 percent),” the survey concluded.

While deals are still driving many purchase decisions, budgets for fall travel are still “fairly substantial.” Forty-seven percent of those polled anticipate spending \$2,000-\$4,999 on their trip, while 27 percent plan to spend up to \$10,000. In addition, two-third percent of those polled say their fall getaway did not replace a more traditional summer vacation.

“Though the recent recession made travelers more value-minded, they are no longer holding off on leisure travel,” said Travel Guard Vice President Carol Mueller. “They are, however, being more cautious about their purchase decisions. One of the ways they are doing so is by purchasing travel insurance to cover their investment.” (*Travel Mole, September 7*)

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### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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